DC

61

CATWOMAN™

HOWARD
RAFFAELE
GANDINI

D.NA
9.23

NINE LIVES
PART 3

13+
TEEN

DC HEROES UNITE IN A CELEBRATION OF BLACK EXCELLENCE!

DC BLACK HISTORY MONTH

100 PAGES OF ALL-NEW STORIES AVAILABLE IN JANUARY

DC POWER 2024

FEATURING A FAR SECTOR EPILOGUE BY N.K. JEMISIN AND JAMAL CAMPBELL!

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GOTHAM CITY.

TOMCAT. ARE YOU IN?

I'M WHERE I NEED TO BE, CATWOMAN.

ARE YOU?

CLOSE ENOUGH FOR VIGILANTE WORK.

ARE OUR TARGETS IN PLACE?

YEP. AND FROM WHAT I CAN SEE, THEY'RE PERFECTLY CHEERFUL.

THEY DON'T *SUSPECT* A THING.

ARE THESE SOME OF THE ONES THE *MAMA CAT* TRAINED DURING HER RECENT EXPERIMENT?*

I WISH YOU WOULDN'T CALL HER THAT.

*SEE BATMAN/CATWOMAN: THE GOTHAM WAR FOR MORE! --EDITORIALLY ACROBATIC ARIANNA

AND NO...

LOOK OUT!

...THEY'RE HASIGAWAS. THE ONES I TRAINED.

OOH, WHAT'D THEY DO TO TICK YOU OFF?

COUPLE OF THINGS. EIKO HASIGAWA TOLD THEM TO STAY AWAY FROM THE DOCKS.

NOW THEY GET PUNISHED, AND I KEEP MY HANDS CLEAN.

YOU'RE A DANGEROUS WOMAN.

YOU KNOW HOW THEY ARE--MEN IN THIS LIFE CAN'T STAND TO TAKE ORDERS FROM A WOMAN.

THEY'LL THINK THAT IT WAS THEIR OWN IDEA TO STAY AWAY AFTER THIS. NOT THE WOMAN WHO GAVE THEM THE ORDERS.

WHAP

THEY'LL BE MAD AT MAMA CAT WHEN SHE GETS BACK...

INCOMING CALL.

IT'S BEING FORWARDED FROM MY OFFICE. MIND IF I TAKE IT?

HAPPY TO HELP.

URK!

YOU'RE A BUSY WOMAN.

GOOD BOY.

SPEAK?

EXCUSE ME, DO I SOUND LIKE A *DOG* TO YOU?

SELINA. WHY ARE YOU CALLING?

WANTED TO CHECK IN. *HOMESICK.*

*THIS IS ALWAYS WHERE PEOPLE FAIL AT FAKING THEIR OWN DEATHS--THEY CAN'T STOP THEMSELVES FROM **CALLING HOME** TO CHECK IN.*

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD. ACT LIKE IT.

YOU'RE CRABBY. PUT *DARIO* ON.

*DON'T USE MY **NAME**--*

OH, YOU SOUND LIKE *BATMAN.*

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU TWO WERE SUITED UP-- WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?

DISCIPLINING SOME SUBORDINATES FROM BABY CAT'S DAY JOB.

HASIGAWA BOYS NEED CATWOMAN TO SCARE 'EM.

*BABY CAT-- OH I BET SHE **LOATHES** THAT.*

...HOW'S DUCHESS?

FAT AND SASSY.

SHE MISS ME?

IF THIS ISN'T URGENT, CAN WE TALK LATER?!

KRAK!

DON'T LET ME BOTHER YOU.

CLK

I admit it-- I'm lonely. I miss taking care of my city, the people who need me.

I'm tired of talking to **myself**, and I can only pamper the locals so much before I get bored.

I don't usually have time to be lonely. I'm in an ice bath, praying my **bones** knit back together before someone figures out what's been stolen. Sleeping. **Healing.**

But this time...I'm **fine.**

Whatever this is...a freak effect of Vandal Savage's meteoric explosion...

...or a blessing from some **god** who looks out for me...

...all this **dying** is making me feel **alive again.**

But I can't get addicted. Only **nine lives** for this cat.

You know me-- when I've got something to spend, it **burns a hole in my pocket.**

I held on to each of these missions for a reason. They were **deadly.** And no score is worth your life...at least...

...if you've only got **one** life to live...

DON'T TRASH THE PLACE, KITTIES.

MRROW

THIS ROOM IS IN *SOMEONE'S* NAME, AFTER ALL.

I won't be back to see them.

But I've made my offering. They look after me, and I'll need all the looking after I can get. I'm on the road to steal...

...the most **dangerous** substance on planet Earth.

RYCHAT NUCLEAR POWER PLANT CONTAINMENT SITE, APAROPEST FOREST, MARKOVIA.

Decades ago, during one of Markovia's several recessions, they made a deal with a **European nuclear power company** to use the empty countryside as a staging ground for new, unstable forms of nuclear power.

That way, if it melted down--which it did, of course--it would be **far** from the homeland. **Hundreds** of hardworking employees were killed--all Markovians.

What I need is in there, in the still-smoking radioactive **heart** of the thing.

It's been too hot to even approach until now. And with the Justice League broken up, rogue nations get **bold**...and I keep my ears to the ground.

Not that I'm much safer taking my time out here. The only reason this forest is so lush is because the earth is **poisoned** with fallout.

Humans can't spend time here unless they're **suicidal**--

--doesn't seem to bother the **wolves** though.

HISSSS!

GRRRAWOOOOO!

I want to be clear--before this becomes anything?

I like **dogs**--normal, nonradioactive dogs, **just fine.**

KRAK!

WHINE!

We can agree, these wolves are monsters.

It's not their fault.

GRRRR RAR RAR RAR

It's **our** fault, really.

They're just defending their **home**--

--but I can't let them take it out on me.

I have a few **lives** to spare, but not **that** many.

Just holding this radioactive **score in my hands** is going to kill me, slowly and painfully.

I can't afford to get **thrown to the wolves.**

I'm not the only fool who's tried to come here. Plenty of **atomic aspirants** have left their bones in the snow trying to get enough to make a dirty bomb.

Then there are the **opportunists,** who watch for the bones in the snow, and try to collect from the dead.

For a year or two, they tried offering trips to this place. **Influencers** and **armchair historians** wanted to see it for themselves, and Markovia needed the money.

It was a great trip, but people thought they looked a little bruised in the pictures.

Then their hair started **falling out** live on camera. Later, teeth.

Danger
Radiation Risk

They **stopped** offering tours after that.

The score: **black-glass corium.**

A byproduct of nuclear meltdowns, it's the most **radioactive** thing humans can make with their own bad ideas.

It's so radioactive that it's self-heating--self-**melting.** A swirl of nuclear lava with potential **eternal energy** at its core... if you can get near it.

After just **two minutes** in the presence of raw corium, a person takes on enough radiation to be dead in a week.

Why do **I** want it?

Call it a challenge. The **unstealable score.**

I'll exchange my sample to a **morally sound** interested party and have the capes contain the rest.

And if I hadn't already taken on enough radiation to get myself killed on this mission...

...I have **now.**

It's the most beautiful place I've ever seen.

Something from a fairy tale, complete with **dark powers.** I want to break off all the gems and stick them in my pockets. I want to hold them up to the light and put them in my mouth.

I want to share this with a lover like a **secret.**

But every second I spend here... is killing me.

These crystals are so hot with nuclear energy that they're almost melting me.

There's something deeply **broken** in me.

The most dangerous thing on Earth, and I'm filled with a longing to **take it with my hands.** I want it.

SSSS!

The prettiest jewel I've ever held, and she gets encased in lead.

IN WE GO.

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

Trucks. **Opportunists.** To be expected.

Cameras and tech may fail in the radiation, but they likely spotted me with the same thing I used for surveillance--**binoculars** and a **tower view.**

Stupid, Selina.

The heat is cooking my **brain** in here.

WHOEVER THINKS THEY'RE GETTING OUT EASY WITH THE CORIUM, DON'T TOY WITH THEM! ***SHOOT*** WHEN YOU SEE MOVEMENT!

No problem. I can handle a few chumps with guns.

But the heat has moved **inside** me now...burning my insides and weakening me at my core.

There's a pain in me I'm not **ready** for.

I DON'T KNOW, MAN. I DON'T LIKE THIS. WHAT IF WE GET SOME METAHUMAN MUTATION--

IDIOT, THE ONLY THING WE'RE LIKELY TO END UP WITH IS CANCER JUST FROM ***STANDING HERE***--BUT AT LEAST OUR FAMILIES DIE RICH!

I've felt my heart stop. I've felt the sudden death.

KRAK!

But I wasn't prepared for **this.** The slow death.

My bones feel **hot** in my skin.

Pain like this is **rare,** a klaxon from the body that something is desperately, terribly wrong. And it is.

If I don't get out of here soon, I'll drop dead right in front of them.

WHAT THE @#$% IS THIS...BLEEDING, CRAZY ***MONSTER WOMAN!***

Nothing ticks a man off more than a girl who's ugly and **happy** about it.

They shouldn't shoot at me. If the corium touches the air, it'll burn. The concrete? It'll explode.

HSSSS!

And I can't dance circles around them like I usually do.

AAA!

BRATTATAATATAAA

AH-- STOP SHOOTING-- I'M GETTING HIT BY FRIENDLY FIRE!

The exhaustion from the radiation sickness is setting in. It feels like I'm **melting** inside.

KILL HER!

Like everything in me is liquefying in a slow slide down to my impossibly **heavy** legs.

Every feat of strength, every dodge feels like it could be my last.

#@$%! KILL THIS WITCH!

ZIP! ZIP! ZIP! ZIP!

And if you're **counting**--I've only got one death to lose here if I want to even **try** to stay on track.

CH-CHK!

I can't afford to let these guys shoot me and then wake up here--already irradiated beyond repair.

BRATTATATATAT

I've got to get **out.** Do what all cats in pain do.

Find a nice, empty place to **die alone.**

CH-CHK!

This was stupid.

I knew corium was deathly toxic, but I underestimated **how** toxic. Underestimated how hard I'd have to fight my way out of here.

AAAH!

THK

I'm going to die here, **again** and **again,** too weak to even crawl away from the source and save myself.

WE CAN'T GET THROUGH. IT'S LEAD.

WE'LL BLOW IT OPEN AT THE CRACK. GET DEMOLITIONS ON IT--

NOW!

BRATTAT! BRATTATAT!

Weeks of pain await me, and then nothing. What a **waste.**

What a @#$%#%@ **waste** of **six good lives.**

...MEW?

SHH!

WHAT ARE... YOU *DOING HERE?*

IF THE WOLVES CAN LIVE HERE, SO CAN *WE.*

THERE'S *NOWHERE* A CAT CAN'T GO, IF IT WANTS.

IS THIS... MY BRAIN... MELTING? OR ARE YOU... *REAL?*

F'YOU'RE REAL... YOU COULD HAVE...

DON'T DIE YET.

...HELPED... SOONER...

HSSS!

I SAID, DON'T DIE!

It's just a cat scratch, but the pain is **indescribable.** I've never felt anything like it.

It's so intense it's making me **believe** in crazy things.

YOU DON'T HAVE THE *LUXURY* OF DEATH. NOT HERE.

WHAT *ARE YOU?* YOUR *VOICE--* THE CATS--

I AM THE ONE WHO LOOKS AFTER CATS.

THE LUCKIEST AND BEST OF THEM GAIN MY FAVOR. THE FAVOR OF *REBIRTH.*

IS IT A *TEST?* AM I... FAILING?

ARE YOU?

I--*YES.* I THOUGHT I COULD *USE* THIS. I THOUGHT--

OTHER GODS CALL THAT *HUBRIS.*

NOT ME, THOUGH. I AM PLEASED.

YOU'RE NOT REAL.

THIS IS FROM THE METEOR, WHAT VANDAL SAVAGE DID.*

*READ ALL ABOUT VANDAL'S METEOR MAYHEM IN BATMAN/CATWOMAN: THE GOTHAM WAR - SCORCHED EARTH #1! --ANNOTATING ARI

THERE IS...A PERFECTLY *LOGICAL* EXPLANATION FOR THIS...

AH YES. A CAVEMAN-- WHO BETRAYED YOU-- GAVE YOU THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY FROM A METEORITE.

MORE LOGICAL THAN--

THAN THE FORCES ETERNAL, THE GODS OF OLD, WHO WATCHED YOUR SO-CALLED IMMORTALS BE BORN AND WILL WATCH AS THE SUN GOES OUT AND THEY SOMEDAY DIE?!

...MERCY...

NO. *DEATH* IS MERCY. *REBIRTH* IS YOUR GIFT.

DEMOLITION'S READY!

DON'T. DIE. YET.

HCK!

D-DON'T SHOOT!

A beautiful place...

...to die alone.

...WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?

YOU'RE IN PAIN.

I COULDN'T IGNORE THAT. CORIUM? WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

I FELT *CHALLENGED*, SUPERMAN.

BY WHO?

IT'S...AH, **OW...** NOT THAT KIND OF CHALLENGE.

TAKE IT-- THE SAMPLE..

DESTROY-- ***SSS***, THE REST SO NO ONE CAN GET IT... GET HURT...

I CAN DO THAT FOR YOU.

GO, *NOW*, AND--

NO, CATWOMAN.

LET'S GET YOU TO THE HOSPITAL.

AH! OW--

PLEASE-- SUPES--THERE'S NO POINT.

PLEASE... PUT ME DOWN...

RADIATION SICKNESS--THERE'S NOTHING MUNDANE TO BE DONE...AND I DON'T WANT TO WASTE ANY *METAHUMAN'S* TIME.

DESTROY THE REST... SAFELY...

I WILL. THANK YOU FOR THE SAMPLE.

I *THOUGHT* I'D HEARD YOUR VOICE OVER IN GOTHAM, TALKING ABOUT *DYING* AND *COMING BACK*. YOU WEREN'T BEING METAPHORICAL?

NO. S'TRUE. TRUST ME.

M'READY... M'SAFE HERE. I'LL WAKE UP... SOON.

YOU REALLY MEAN IT. YOU'RE NOT AFRAID AT ALL.

NO.

...WELL...

...NO.

YOU WERE SCARED?

NOT OF *DYING*...I'LL COME BACK. BUT...

...IT HURTS SO MUCH-- THIS TIME--

--I...WISHED I WASN'T GOING THROUGH IT *ALONE.*

YOU AREN'T, SELINA.

:SNF:

M'SO TIRED...

IT'S OKAY.

YOU CAN REST NOW.

CATWOMAN
NINE LIVES PART 3

TINI HOWARD STORY
STEFANO RAFFAELE ARTIST
VERONICA GANDINI COLORS
LUCAS GATTONI LETTERS
DAVID NAKAYAMA COVER
RACHTA LIN, INHYUK LEE & JORGE FORNÉS VARIANT COVERS
DANI 1:25 VARIANT COVER
DAVID NAKAYAMA 1:50 VARIANT COVER
JAMES REID ASSISTANT EDITOR
ARIANNA TURTURRO EDITOR
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SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER.
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY.

DC CELEBRATES
BLACK HISTORY MONTH
WITH STUNNING VARIANT COVERS BY NIKOLAS DRAPER-IVEY!

ACTION COMICS #1060

GREEN ARROW #9

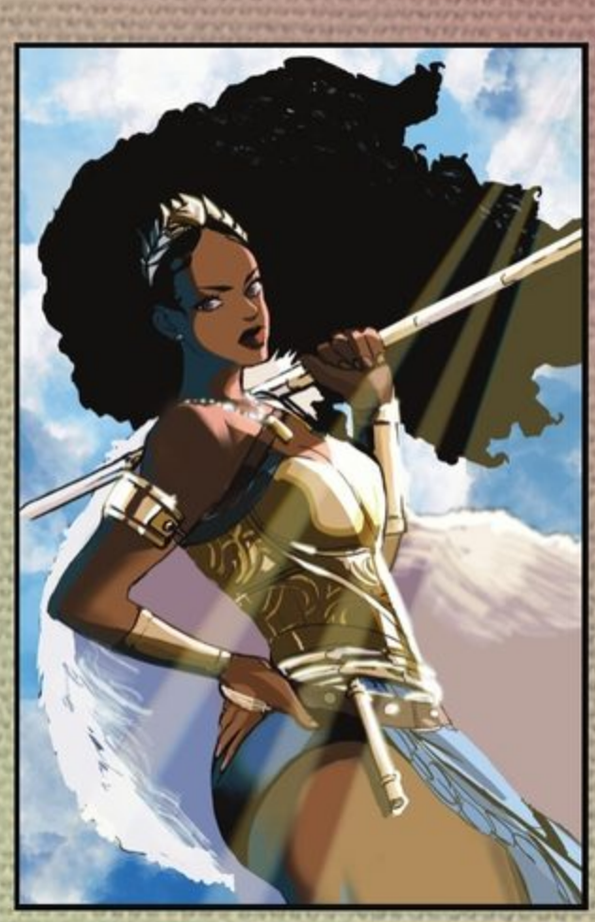
GREEN LANTERN: WAR JOURNAL #6

JAY GARRICK: THE FLASH #5

OUTSIDERS #4

SPEED FORCE #4

TITANS #8



WONDER WOMAN #6

COLLECT THEM ALL!

DC BLACK HISTORY MONTH

ON SALE IN
FEBRUARY

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INTERVIEW WITH WRITER

JASON AARON

Eisner Award-winning writer Jason Aaron and fan-favorite artist John Timms usher in an unpredictable new era for the Man of Steel in *Action Comics* #1061, which kicks off the yearlong Superman Superstars initiative. DC Nation talked with Aaron to get the lowdown on what fans can expect.

What's it like not only to write Superman—but to write him in *Action Comics*, the series that started it all?

It's a huge honor. No other way to describe it. What a phenomenal way to start my first real stint as a writer for DC Comics. First a Batman book, in the form of *Batman: Off-World*, and now a story for *Action Comics*, the series that truly paved the way for so much of what has shaped my life as a comic book fan and creator.

Is Superman a character you've always wanted to write?

For a long time, yeah. I've felt for a while now like you're not really a proper comic book writer until you've gotten to write Superman. Also, there's the fact that my entire 20-year comics-writing career has coincided with me moving to Kansas, so it feels like I need to pay the Man of Steel back for what he's so graciously given me.

How have you enjoyed collaborating with artist John Timms?

John was born to draw Superman and his world. He gives all of it such majesty and splendor, while also nailing all the creepier, weirder elements that are such a big part of this story. And he really goes all out with the first big fight scene we see between Superman and Bizarro, taking things to a truly epic scale.

How did you land on Bizarro as the villain for your story? What makes him different in this story from what readers have seen from him before?

I love the all-out weirdness of Bizarro, but I also saw the chance to bring a darker, more sorrowful edge to the character. This is a broken, damaged version of poor Bizarro, who stumbles upon a revelation about himself that allows him to strike in a wild new way against a world that has hated and mocked him for far too long.

DON'T MISS *ACTION COMICS* #1061, ON SALE IN JANUARY!

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